

# Winter News 2025/26



*Low tide at Flaghead Chine in January*

## **BCP finances**

We have all read and heard much about the state of local government finances for many years. Prior to the merger of our three local councils, those of us who live in Poole were led to believe that a merger to create one large authority would reduce overheads and create more efficiency with a considerably leaner workforce.

We are all aware, through multiple news reports, of the financial mismanagement of the previous BCP administration including the council's reserves being raided. The government even intervened to address many issues. During the first year of the current administration, attention was focussed on addressing the dire financial situation which they inherited. However with further reductions in government support and pressure from specific areas including special educational needs, budgets remain tight.

We have been told by portfolio holders at our recent public meetings that BCP must look at all opportunities to consider commercial opportunities and Deputy Leader Cllr Mike Cox, is now introducing 100% council tax for privately owned beach huts at Mudeford, so should we in Poole be concerned about our tenancies and future rent rises?

In January, we put some questions to Cllr Rich Herrett ...

Another new year and another rent increase for BCP beach hut tenants. This year we can expect a 5% increase in our annual rents being the final year of the five year plan devised by the previous administration. It remains to be seen what lies ahead from 2027 as the state of BCP's finances sees no sign of significant improvement in spite of a boost from increased seafront car parking receipts with the extended 2025 season.

Questions were posed to portfolio holder Councillor Richard Herrett on this and other matters at a face to face meeting in January.

Budget proposals go before Full Council in February.

We will keep you apprised of news and updates as they occur.

Visit [www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk](http://www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk)

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## Interview with Cllr Rich Herrett, Portfolio Holder for Destination, Leisure & Commercial Operations including seafront and tourism.

I first asked about the potential for future rent rises beyond the 2026 agreed increase of 5%.

Rich replied: "No decision has yet been made for any future beach hut rent increases and will depend on the financial situation at the time. There will be consultation with tenants before any decisions are reached."



I suggested that parking revenue this year must surely have increased following such good weather over a prolonged season. Rich agreed that during sunny weather people flood to the beaches but this is balanced by increasing costs and some people head there when they might have gone to town centres where parking across the BCP area was down.

On the subject of parking, I asked whether the results of the government approved temporary measures introduced during last summer's peak season had been prepared. Rich confirmed that a report will be presented to Cabinet in the spring subject to Department of Transport approval.

At our Autumn meeting when the need to explore commercial opportunities for council properties was discussed, we were told the Tourist Information Centre at Pier Approach was being considered for alternative use as a catering kiosk - I asked if this had been progressed. Rich said: "I can assure you that a tourist information service will definitely be retained in a central seafront location and various options are being considered but not yet confirmed."



And what about the Blue Flag scheme? Will potential sponsors be prepared to fund the scheme again when scant recognition of their contributions was acknowledged this year?

I was assured that sufficient sponsorship has been received to allow the scheme to be funded again with agreement that those businesses will be acknowledged appropriately.

I asked about the new residents' cards - what will be the benefits? Rich replied: "You'll get an extra hour's parking free at town centre surface car parks and 10% off at seafront kiosks, plus one free swim a week at any BCP leisure centre." The cards will be launched in May and will cost between £5 and £10 per annum.

Elections for Town and Parish Councils will be held in May. Clerks will be recruited and funded from a precept on council tax - typically £30 on a Band D property. Town councillors do not receive allowances, as they are voluntary appointments. Additional funding can come from Neighbourhood CIL (developers' contributions) in addition to government grants which unitary authorities are unable to access. Town councils will have to secure premises in Broadstone and Poole where staff can focus on local issues which BCP funding can no longer address.

A request to central government, in an attempt balance the books, has been made and is still awaiting a response. A promised resolution to the current SEND deficit, which by the end of this financial year will amount to almost £180million, has been pushed back to 2028/29. In the meantime interest is being accrued at £10million a year! Hence the constrained budget which BCP is constantly grappling with.

# Meanwhile at the beach extensive work is ongoing

## Repairs to handrails at Branksome Dene Chine



## Branksome Chine



**Completed balustrade work to lower level huts and ongoing works to ten blocks at Branksome Chine funded by UK Government Levelling Up funding.**



Funded by UK Government

**£200,000 UK GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT**  
 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Investment – Branksome Chine Beach Huts Balustrade Replacement.

As part of the LUF government investment, the existing non-compliant and deteriorating balustrade at Branksome Chine beach huts will be replaced with a marine-grade stainless steel balustrade system, complete with durable infill panels.

The new installation will meet current safety and accessibility standards, while offering improved resilience in the coastal environment. This upgrade enhances both the functionality and visual appeal of the site, supporting the LUF's aim to invest in safe, inclusive, and high-quality public space.

BCP Council

POWERED BY  
**LEVELLING UP**



## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

An Annual General Meeting is to be held on **2nd April 2026 at 7pm**

East Dorset Lawn Tennis Club, Salterns Road, Poole.

Refreshments are available at the venue.  
Guest speakers from BCP will be invited to speak and take your questions.  
We look forward to welcoming as many members as possible.

**If anyone would like to serve on the committee next year please let me know. We are URGENTLY seeking to elect a new Secretary**

Bob Lister  
Chairman  
[bob@sunwiser.co.uk](mailto:bob@sunwiser.co.uk)

## Annual subscriptions for 2026 are now due

Our treasurer Tony Mullins would like to remind members that your £5 subs are now due to renew your annual membership.



Please contact Tony by email [tmullins196@gmail.com](mailto:tmullins196@gmail.com) with your name, home address, most importantly your hut number and location and your email address.

Then please make a BACS transfer to our account with Lloyds Bank or alternatively send a cheque made payable to Poole Beach Huts Association. New members are always welcomed so please encourage new and neighbouring tenants to join us.

Sort Code: 775024 Account No. : 32480860.

For more information about the Association visit [www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk](http://www.poolebeachhuts.co.uk) or contact

Chairman, Bob Lister 07980 928 752 or email [bob@sunwiser.co.uk](mailto:bob@sunwiser.co.uk)

